



Allison Herrera added 3 new photos.

Yesterday at 5:52pm ·

I'm writing to clear up some issues regarding my identity and how I represent myself as a professional and as a person. I'm a Native Journalist. And while the tribe I come from may not be federally recognized and small, it's part of who I am and it's informed my work as a reporter and a storyteller. I'm part Salinan Indian. Our land base is near the central coast of California-near Cayucos and Morro Bay. No, I'm not full blooded and have never represented myself as that. My grandfather's family came from Mexico and he married my grandmother, Anna, who my daughter is named after. I grew up with and was raised partially by my grandmother, the community of friends she had and the stories she told me about her mom and everything she knew about Toro Creek, the village where her mom and grandmother were from. We are not extinct. Our culture, language and ways were broken and forgotten. But, I am trying to change that-as a journalist and a storyteller in my community. Many people are trying to change that. I look to my Xolon relatives here-@Deb Krol, Penny Powers Hurt, Gregg Castro, Jack Alger and all of the people working to bring the language and the culture back. It's a slow and long process, but one we are all committed to-even if we may not agree on everything.

I strive to tell stories about Indigenous communities with respect, ethics and pride. Recently, my reporting partners Isaac Kestenbaum and Josie Holtzman and I were honored to be a part of NPR Story Lab Workshop. Our project Inter(Nation)al was granted some start-up funds to create a series about treaties and why they matter in today's world. The history of treaties is one of pain and sorrow, and those stories are ones ALL Americans should know. And it's those stories we are going to tackle with the utmost care and respect.

I want to thank Native American Journalists Association, Association of Independents in Radio and NPR Story Lab Workshop for supporting me in this process as a journalist and a professional. Without them I would not be in the place I am today. I work for a major news organization, one where I am always pushing that they tell stories about Indigenous communities all over the world. I have the confidence that we will do more thanks to my pushing.

And I want to thank my family-my mom, sisters, cousins, aunts and uncles who know where we are from. Anita Clemente, Stephanie Lunt and most of all my grandmother whose image I share below. I miss her so much and am sorry I never got to meet her mother, my great-grandmother. But, she is someone who guides me as a moral compass and whose voice I listen for when I am here-either at my computer or out in the world.

I stand by who I am and I will never pretend to be something I am not.



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